
BILTMORE VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

BOOK 1 GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES AND POLICIES



Historic Resources Commission
Asheville, North Carolina

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CREDITS

The development of these guidelines has been a project of the Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe County, Doug Swaim, Director.

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Special appreciation is expressed to the Biltmore Estate for assistance in researching historic photographs and architectural drawings. Historic drawings published in these books are by Richard Sharp Smith, except where noted, courtesy of the Historic Resources Commission. Historic post cards are courtesy of Robert Griffin, Architect.

Map Orientation:

It is normal convention to orient all maps with North placed at the top of the page. However, several early maps of Biltmore Village were drawn in the opposite orientation. To preserve original wording on these maps, they are presented in their original configuration.

PREFACE

This booklet contains general information about design review in the Biltmore Village Historic District, and should be used as a guide in all construction projects that involve work that will be visible to the public. It contains design ideas that apply to both rehabilitation and new construction. In addition to this booklet, there are two other publications that should be consulted: Book 2 provides more specific guidelines for rehabilitation only. The other booklet, Book 3, provides more detailed guidelines for new construction projects.

WHICH BOOKS APPLY:

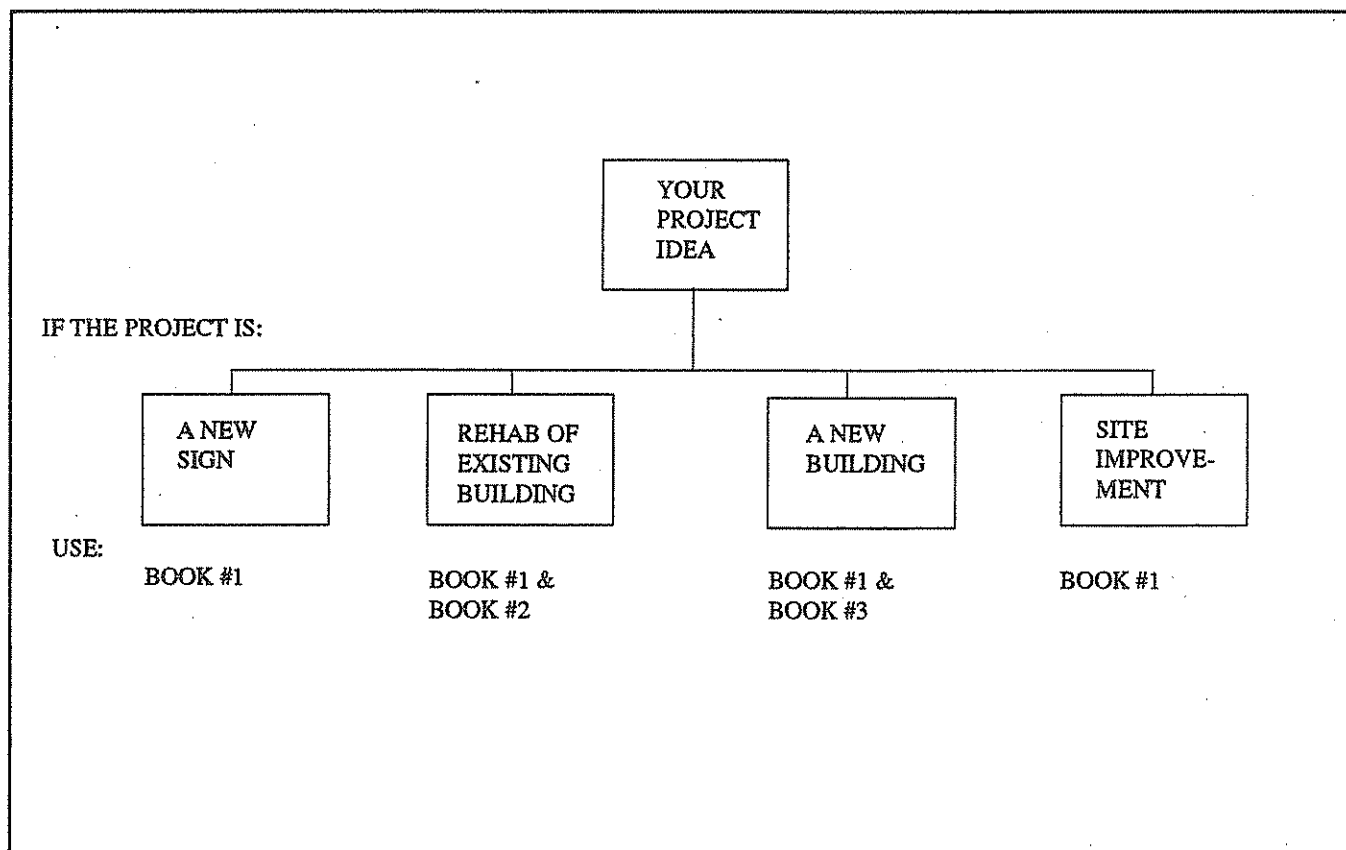

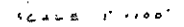



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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

SCOPE OF THE GUIDELINES

All exterior changes, including renovation and new construction, are subject to design review in the Biltmore Village Historic District. This includes any work requiring a building permit as well as any exterior painting, sign alteration, landscape work, building illumination, or any minor maintenance and repair items that may change the character of the exterior of a building or its site. Selection and location of street trees is also subject to review, along with general landscape locations. (A specific description of work subject to review and that work exempt from review is provided in Appendix A.)

The Guidelines for Rehabilitation provide design principles for historic structures and also for buildings that do not have historic value. (These are called "non-contributing buildings"). Professional surveyors determined the historic significance for each structure in a building-by-building analysis, and the results of this evaluation are on file with the Historic Resources Commission. You should refer to this information in determining how the guidelines apply to your project.

HOW THE GUIDELINES ARE ORGANIZED

The Design Guidelines are organized in 3 booklets:

BOOK ONE contains overview materials that apply to all construction in the district. This book includes a general explanation of the historic design concept for the Village as it was envisioned by its founder, George Vanderbilt, and his designers, Frederick Law Olmsted, Richard Morris Hunt, and Richard S. Smith. It also includes an explanation of the goals for preservation and development in the Village.

Some specific design guidelines found in Book One are:

- Site design guidelines
- Sign guidelines
- Color guidelines

BOOK TWO contains Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings. It is divided into sections that address a range of building types and styles that exist in the Village. The building types include:

- Individual Landmark Structures (most were designed by R. M. Hunt).
- Commercial-type buildings (found in the Village Core).

- Historic Cottages (most were designed by R. S. Smith).
- Auto-oriented commercial buildings (later additions to the village).

BOOK THREE contains Guidelines for New Construction and Additions. Compatibility with the surrounding context is a basic principle underlying these guidelines, and they include concepts that correspond to different sub-areas within the District that have distinct characteristics.

Separate chapters address:

- Reconstructing an historic building.
- Designing a new building in the historic style.
- Developing a "contemporary" design.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF USING THE GUIDELINES?

A good design will improve the market image of the businesses housed inside, and enhance the overall character of Biltmore Village. Consciously or unconsciously, people react to the visual quality of their environment, and buildings and storefront windows constantly provide clues about the character of the businesses found there.

These design guidelines seek to encourage renovation and new development within the Village in a manner that will strengthen visual harmony, enhance historic integrity, and encourage creative design solutions. The Guidelines do not dictate styles, but rather suggest a variety of choices for achieving design compatibility within the Village. The Guidelines also can help to protect property values by encouraging improvements that maintain buildings as viable assets. Mostly they help to preserve the historic integrity of this important cultural resource.

PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE GUIDELINES

The City of Asheville designated Biltmore Village as a local historic district by City Ordinance #1624 in 1987, in part out of a concern for protecting its historic integrity and for enhancing its character. A process for design review was established to implement this protection policy to be administered by the Historic Resources Commission. As a means of providing a uniform standard for review, the Commission developed these guidelines for design.

A special process for developing these guidelines was employed, in which community members developed specific goals for the district and conducted a visual survey of existing characteristics. Consultants supplemented this information with historical research that documents the original design intent for the Village. A community-based task force reviewed drafts of the guidelines. The final draft was then approved by the Historic Resources Commission.

USE OF THE GUIDELINES

The Historic Resources Commission will use the guidelines in its formal review process to evaluate all proposed changes. Their comments and decisions will be based on the guidelines. Property owners should use the guidelines to determine their basic approach and when developing design concepts on their own. Professional designers and contractors also should use the guidelines when preparing work for their clients. Using the guidelines in the early stages of a project will help to ensure appropriateness of the design and minimize changes later.

Biltmore Village is recognized as a special place to be protected as a community resource, because it represents an important part of Asheville's heritage, and because its unusual character creates a special identity for Asheville today. Residents and visitors alike enjoy its unique resources.

Building improvements are encouraged, because they help to enhance the quality of life for all residents while also strengthening the economic viability of the Village. Buildings that present a good design image can also help provide a strong visual setting for commerce while also preserving the community's heritage. It is in this spirit that these guidelines for more effective building design are presented.

A NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY

Use of the following words in a guideline means that compliance is required for approval:

- shall
- should
- use

Use of terms such as "consider the use of" are suggestions, but are not requirements.

NOTE THAT WHEN A DESIGN APPROACH IS DESCRIBED AS BEING "INAPPROPRIATE," THIS MEANS THE HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION WILL NOT APPROVE SUCH ACTIONS.

WHERE THE TERM "ENCOURAGED" IS USED, THE HRC WILL NOT REQUIRE THIS ACTION, BUT WOULD WELCOME SUCH DESIGN IDEAS.